

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for Mary E. Peters as Secretary of Transportation  
October 17, 2006

Thank you very much. Good afternoon. We are here to congratulate Mary Peters on becoming our Nation's 15th Secretary of Transportation.

Mary is a dedicated public servant, an experienced leader, and one of our Nation's most innovative thinker on transportation issues. Mary brings more than two decades of knowledge and skill to her new post. She also brings to her position the love and support of her friends and her family. I want to thank her family for being here, especially Mary's husband, Terry.

I appreciate my Chief of Staff, Josh Bolten, who is here to administer the oath. Presidents can't administer the oath—[laughter]—so I tapped my man, Josh. [Laughter]

I want to thank Maria Cino, who is the Deputy Secretary, Acting Secretary. I thank you for your service and your friendship.

I appreciate my friend Secretary Norm Mineta. I got some other stuff to say about you here in a minute. [Laughter] I do want to thank Rodney Slater for joining us, former Secretary of Transportation, as well as Jim Burnley. Thank you both for coming. I'm proud you're here, and I know Secretary Peters appreciates it as well.

The job of Secretary of Transportation is one of the most important in our Federal Government. The American people rely on the Department of Transportation to maintain a safe, reliable, and efficient transportation system. And the future of our growing economy and changing infrastructure depend on the decisions made by the Secretary that will be put into action by this Department.

The Secretary of Transportation also plays an important role in our Nation's coordinated efforts to guard against terrorist threats to our aircraft, seaports, and infrastructure. For the past 6 years, these re-

sponsibilities have been carried out by Norm Mineta, who served our country with distinction, integrity, and dedication. Norm is our Nation's longest serving Secretary of Transportation, and he served at a time of great consequence for our country.

I remember after the attacks of September the 11th, when Norm led the successful effort to bring tens of thousands of passengers aboard commercial aircraft to safe landings. He grounded quite a few planes, including the ones my mom and dad were on. They've always thanked you for that, Norm. [Laughter]

After Hurricane Katrina, Norm and his team helped quickly repair and reopen the major—area's major highways, airports, seaports, and pipelines. He offered incentive-based contracts and used other innovative ideas, and as a result, the Department of Transportation was to get critical infrastructure in place faster than usual. I want to thank you for your leadership, Norm, and I want to thank you for your lifetime of service to our country, and I wish you all the very best. And I want to remind you, Maria made you look pretty good while you were in office. [Laughter]

Mary Peters is the right person to succeed Norm as the Secretary of Transportation. She worked for several years with Secretary Mineta, and she understands the fine legacy she has to live up to. She also knows firsthand the skills and dedication of the men and women who work here at the Department of Transportation. She's going to be a fine boss. She understands that to maintain our Nation's competitiveness and to sustain our growing economy, we need a Secretary who can see the challenges and be willing to confront them.

Mary Peters will provide strong leadership. She has spent a lifetime working on transportation issues in both the private and

public sectors. Most recently, she has served as senior executive for transportation policy at a major engineering firm. For 4 years before that, she led the Federal Highway Administration. Before coming to Washington, she served in the Arizona Department of Transportation. For more than 15 years, she rose through the ranks to become director in 1998.

At both the State and Federal level, Mary Peters has worked to improve safety and security on roads and bridges. She's worked to reduce traffic congestion and modernize America's transportation infrastructure. As Secretary of Transportation, Mary will work closely with Federal, State, and local leaders to ensure that America has a state-of-the-art transportation system so that we can meet the needs of our growing economy.

In her new position, she will face important challenges. Next year, she will lead the Department's efforts to reauthorize our Nation's aviation programs. Our Nation is outgrowing our aviation capacity. More people are flying every year, and so we must modernize our airports and our air traffic control.

We also face the challenges of reducing congestion in our surface and maritime transportation systems. To accomplish these tasks, America needs creative thinking and innovative solutions, and I believe Mary Peters will provide them.

As Mary works to build a better transportation system, she will be a careful steward of the people's money. She brings to her new position a reputation for fiscal discipline and integrity. As head of the Federal Highway Administration, Mary introduced better fiscal oversight and accountability. She improved management for the largest transportation projects. She worked closely with her department's inspector general to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse. She's going to carry this kind of diligence into her new job.

She understands the importance of a modern infrastructure and good management. And I'm pleased she has agreed to serve her country once again. As she takes on this important position, she has my full trust and my confidence. Mary, I look forward to working with you as the new Secretary of Transportation. Congratulations.

It's now my honor to witness the swearing-in of Mary Peters.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:16 p.m. at the Department of Transportation. In his remarks, he referred to Terryl Peters, Sr., husband of Secretary of Transportation Peters; and former Secretary of Transportation James H. Burnley IV. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary Peters.

## Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Ivo Sanader of Croatia *October 17, 2006*

*President Bush.* It's been my honor to welcome the Prime Minister of Croatia here. Mr. Prime Minister, welcome.

*Prime Minister Sanader.* Thank you very much.

*President Bush.* We just had a very lengthy and interesting discussion, which is

what you would expect friends to do. I consider the Prime Minister a friend; I consider Croatia a friend as well.

We talked about foreign policy issues, issues of peace. I thank the people of Croatia for their support in Afghanistan of the young democracy. I also believe it's in the